

Paved with Good Intentions: American Military Intervention In the Contemporary World

PAPER FOR ADMIRAL RICHARD G. COLBERT MEMORIAL PRIZE:

FOR THE ESSAY FOCUSING ON AN ECONOMIC, MILITARY, POLITICAL, STRATEGIC, OR TACTICAL ASPECT OF AN APPROPRIATE PROFESSIONAL TOPIC.

ABSTRACT: IMPLICIT QUESTION: SHOULD THE U.S. SEEK CRITERIA FOR COMMITTING MILITARY FORCES?

YES. GUIDELINES RESTRAINING AMERICAN MILITARY INTERVENTION MAY PRECLUDE THE IMPRUDENT USE OF FORCE. U.S. DOCTRINE LIMITING MILITARY INTERVENTION, DEVELOPED UNDER CASPAR WEINBERGER AND REFINED UNDER COLIN POWELL, HAS SLOWLY DEVOLVED DURING THE POST COLD WAR ERA. CRITERIA FOUND POLITICALLY OR MILITARILY INCONVENIENT WERE DISCARDED UNDER THE CLINTON ADMINISTRATION. THIS HAS CONTRIBUTED TO FOREIGN POLICY DRIFT AND UNNEEDED WORLD INSTABILITY. UNDER THE NEW DEFACTO "DOABILITY DOCTRINE," MILITARY POWER IS EMPLOYED IN FLEXIBLE WAYS, TO ADDRESS LIMITED, ILL-DEFINED GOALS. KOSOVO IS ONLY THE LATEST EXAMPLE. AFTER ANALYZING THE COSTS AND BENEFITS OF VARIOUS OPTIONS, THE AUTHOR ARGUES THE NEED FOR GUIDELINES, EXPLAINS OPTIONS AND OFFERS PROPOSALS.


"It is imperative . . . not to take the first step without considering the last." - Carl von Clausewitz

"Greatness lies not in being strong, but in the right use of strength." - Henry Ward Beecher

Naval War College Essay Contest

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15. Abstract: Guidelines restraining American military intervention may preclude the imprudent use of force. U.S. doctrine limiting military intervention, developed under Caspar Weinberger and refined under Colin Powell, has slowly devolved during the post Cold War era. Criteria found politically or militarily inconvenient were discarded under the Clinton Administration. This has contributed to foreign policy drift and unneeded world instability. Under the new defacto "Doability Doctrine," military power is employed in flexible ways, to address limited, ill-defined goals. Kosovo is only the latest example. After analyzing the costs and benefits of various options, the author argues the need for guidelines, explains options and offers proposals.			
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Presidential decisions to use American military force have changed tremendously in the past thirty years, providing many alternative models for future planners. At some points articulated guidelines were established for use as a policy maker's check list. This trend has altered in the last several years, making an inherently subjective enterprise more flighty during an era defined by ambiguity. In the absence of an obvious rival threat and with no clear formulas for planners to work with, the flexibility to cope with ambiguity has become the policy. Reaction has become the plan. National interests have been declared and forces dispatched in the absence of true intervention guidelines.

While keeping the military busy may satisfy some, the wisdom of the resulting instability in the world deserves questioning. If properly created and used, guidelines might ensure military forces are applied more wisely in certain conditions when they can achieve specific objectives while avoiding repeating the lessons of Munich, Vietnam, Somalia, and Rwanda, in present and future conflicts. This would help American force planners as well as potential foes recognize what the United States will and will not fight for. By removing the current, pronounced uncertainty for both American force planners and potential adversaries, the U.S. can contribute to stability. The devolution of a recognizable formula for using American military might has contributed to the already unsteady power structures of the post-Cold War world and caused the United States to fight patchwork wars in service to a piecemeal foreign policy.

Background--History of relevant doctrines

The story of military misadventure overseas is at least as old as Homer and Thucydides. As the United States emerged from its heritage of complacent focus on commerce and evolved into great power status following the First World War, defining the proper role of U.S. military forces became more challenging. Munich taught America the folly of ignoring problems abroad and the dangers of appeasement. After Americans overcame their aversion to intervention overseas, hubris in their ability to defeat aggressors presented another problem; a problem that was brutally checked in the jungles of Southeast Asia.

In Vietnam, gradual escalation, waning political will, and indecisive use of force by the White House taught an important lesson to U.S. military leaders "that no significant use of force can succeed without

domestic political support”¹ and that force should be used decisively if it is to be used. Collectively referred to as the “Vietnam syndrome,” whether the cumulative lessons of the war encouraged prudence or timidity is a value judgement. Regardless, the Vietnam conflict soured many on military adventures overseas and the 1983 loss of 241 Marines in Lebanon did nothing to change that.

In contrast, Secretary of State George Schultz warned against “self-doubt” and “paralysis” in foreign policy. “We cannot allow ourselves to become the Hamlet of nations, worrying endlessly over whether and how to respond...”² Spoken one year following the bombing of the Marine barracks in Lebanon, perhaps this event, combined with Schultz’s implication to use force more liberally, encouraged Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger to go public with the Pentagon’s post-Vietnam approach to intervention.

In his November 28, 1984 speech to the National Press Club, Weinberger outlined six conditions for the proper use of military force. They were:

1. Vital interests of the nation or its allies must be at stake;
2. A clear commitment to victory must exist;
3. Political and military objectives must be clear;
4. Forces must be properly sized to achieve the objectives;
5. Reasonable assurance of public and Congressional support must be secured prior to intervening;
and
6. Force must be used only as a last resort.³

Thus the lessons of Vietnam were formalized in the “Weinberger Doctrine.” These tenets were subsequently applied throughout the mid to late 1980s, with escalating success in uses of force against Libya and the invasion of Panama. The Weinberger Doctrine was also used to avoid sending ground troops into Central America and perhaps other regions during this period.⁴ Weinberger’s approach was adopted by his successors and it grew into a cornerstone of American security and military strategy.

After Iraq’s 1990 invasion of Kuwait, it became increasingly clear that if a United States coalition were to forcibly expel Saddam Hussein’s forces, it would require a massive military commitment unseen since Vietnam. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Colin Powell followed the Weinberger Doctrine by ensuring that U.S. vital interests were identified, objectives were clarified and attainable, commitment to

achieve those objectives was solid, overwhelming force was quickly applied, prior public and Congressional support was secured, and all other options, including economic sanctions, were tried first.⁵

The largely successful outcome of Operation DESERT STORM demonstrated to American military leaders that the Weinberger Doctrine on the proper use of force worked exceptionally well, thereby affirming and reinforcing, rather than kicking their Vietnam Syndrome [caution/reluctance toward intervention]. Quick, decisive victory in DESERT STORM, with surprisingly low U.S. casualties, solidified the military's good relations with American Society. Military leaders therefore had no intention of putting their Vietnam lessons behind them after victory in the Gulf, for the Vietnam disaster had taught them well how not to use force.⁶

DESERT STORM is viewed by many as a confirmation of how the U.S. had been wise to strictly follow the Weinberger Doctrine, but at the same time, others view it quite differently. Some considered the outcome obvious proof that the military, bolstered through the Reagan years, could do more than previously possible under Cold War circumstances. It could, for example, be used as an armed Peace Corps, a tool for humanitarianism and a leading builder of the New World Order.

The change in the world environment and subsequent presidencies saw a slow erosion of the relatively strict guidelines of Caspar Weinberger. When exactly his doctrine's guidance faded from scene can be disputed. Even today some of the six elements occasionally mix with signals emanating from the White House, but it certainly is not consistently followed and therefore its tenets can no longer be considered the dominant factors governing the use of American military forces abroad.

Analysis of Weinberger Doctrine

Scarred by both the lessons of inaction in Munich and the arrogance in Vietnam, the Pentagon's adherence to the Weinberger Doctrine helped guide the American military from both appeasement and quagmires while reinforcing the role of public opinion and Congress in the decision to wage war. The Doctrine gave the military an insurance policy against long, unpopular wars by constraining the use of force.⁷ It also harmonized U.S. political, security, and military doctrine by insuring that U.S. forces were not committed without clear interests and backing by the American people to pursue those interests. Thus, the Doctrine reinforced itself and the military's influence on the use of force decision-making. Military chiefs took a more assertive role with their recommendations regarding the cautious use of force, acting as a further constraint upon the war powers of a potentially imperial presidency. When successful, this has

underscored the Doctrine's dominance, bolstered the image of the American military, reasserted U.S. credibility and thereby enhanced deterrence and overall stability.

On the other hand, the Weinberger Doctrine had some significant weaknesses. First, it is entirely based in realism and completely neglects tenets of idealism that have created some of the great triumphs, and yes, even the greatest defeats of U.S. foreign policy this century. The denial and avoidance of morality in taking the nation to war skewed the military's lesson of Vietnam and distorted its present vision regarding political pressure for humanitarian intervention.⁸ Even if one looks past the moral bankruptcy of untempered realism and sees diplomacy exclusively in the realm of *realpolitik*, the Weinberger Doctrine had other problems.

It is innately hamstrung in the face of ambiguity and it can be argued that ambiguity is the dominant characteristic of the post Cold War world. Most conflicts in the early 1990s proved to be intrastate, rather than interstate, thereby rendering them ambiguous by definition.⁹ Weinberger's all or nothing approach often proved inflexible and politically un-useful. Politics is the art of the possible. Like Plato's Republic, the Weinberger doctrine is perfect in theory yet unable to withstand the fog and friction of real world decision-making. It rules out the use of force except for vital national interest, during an era when few rivals truly can threaten America and truly "vital national interests" are therefore difficult to clearly define.

The Weinberger Doctrine also demanded assurance of domestic support in advance, which can be difficult to predict, guarantee, or measure. As the uncertainties of the post Cold War world muddled the waters of international relations, adherence to the doctrine slipped away from decision-makers torn between rigid adherence and inaction, and a new world order that begged for innovation.

Weinberger's rules to avoid another Vietnam provided high hurdles against the use of force, so high, that Weinberger's cabinet colleague, George Schultz later called them "a counsel of inaction bordering on paralysis." General Colin Powell said that he viewed Weinberger's rules as "a practical guide" but perhaps too explicit, thus leading 'potential enemies to look for loopholes.'¹⁰ Calls for clear political and military objectives and a clear intention to win once engaged remained important parts of the successors to the Weinberger Doctrine. Lebanon taught the importance of having an exit strategy before entering.

Powell Doctrine

The Powell Doctrine, while not formally declared, can be viewed as an unwritten amendment to the Weinberger Doctrine that evolved during General Powell's tenure as Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff. It followed the tenets of the predecessor while expanding greatly on a few key elements:

There should be no use of force... unless success is all but guaranteed. Force should be used decisively and its application should preferably be short. As soon as the aims are achieved, American forces should be quickly extracted, lest the military fall into a quagmire. Above all, the image of the armed forces is to be protected.¹¹

Powell had earlier put his ideas to work in Panama and the deserts of the Middle East. Use of massive and decisive force should be only for the most urgent reasons. Short lived operations and timely withdrawals were also crucial because the military did not want to undermine its readiness for 'real' combat by diversions for humanitarian or peacekeeping operations. As Secretary of Defense William Perry said in November 1994, "We field an Army, not a Salvation Army."¹² The Army was notionally structured to fight two major regional contingencies. It would need to retain sufficient numbers and image to remain a force in readiness.

An additional redirection of the Powell Doctrine came in "Joint Pub 3-0, Doctrine for Joint Operations" immediately prior to his retirement. It goes significantly beyond earlier guidelines by distinguishing among types of conflicts and alternative political goals, covering a spectrum including strikes, raids, shows of force, counter-terrorism, counterinsurgency, peacekeeping, peace enforcement, and noncombatant evacuation operations.¹³ The distinction between "war" and "operations other than war involving the use or threat of force" was a clear break from Weinberger because while the goal of the former is to fight and win, the goal of the latter may be only to "support national objectives, deter war, and return to a state of peace."¹⁴ The differentiation acted as implicit acceptance of fighting for less than victory, and forecasted how military force would be used. Interpreting the Weinberger principles as mere guidelines instead of doctrine was early erosion of clear force employment criteria.

* Defined as achieving an objective at acceptable cost.

Analysis of Powell Doctrine

Enumerating differences between the Weinberger and Powell Doctrines may be regarded primarily as an academic exercise. Many authors link the two inextricably, sometimes joined via a hyphen as if referring to one doctrine. This is accurate, but only to a point. Powell's additional elements of massive force, clear exit strategy, and the need to preserve image complemented and clarified a few of Weinberger's points. The focus on massive force decisively applied is an important clarification. The emphasis on clear exit strategy was also important in an era when the lines of war and humanitarian operations blur. Value of the military's image is easily misunderstood, too. An unblemished reputation of competence and vast technological superiority not only fuels the morale of the all-volunteer American military, but it has an important role in intimidating potential foes and thus enhancing U.S. security. Military force must remain credible, but if it is feared and unused because no one dares challenge it, it has been effective. If on the other hand the military is used too frequently and its unavoidable flaws are made public via successive military campaigns, its capacity for action or potential to psychologically intimidate foes erodes and security suffers. Intimidation is key to deterrence. Because deterrence is a matter of intent, an adversary must understand a capability enough to fear it and feel confident that it will be employed against him. This confidence, that force employment would bring serious consequences, is another gift of the doctrines. The ideas of both Weinberger and Powell contributed to national security by creating innate bias *against* potentially destabilizing overseas adventures and thus contributed to the predictability of U.S. actions. Predictability contributed to a strong force in readiness that reinforced deterrence.

Powell extended Weinberger's list of criteria for using force. Perhaps most significant was the General's differentiation between "war" and "operations other than war" and his implicit acceptance that military force in the post Cold War world may not have clear conditions of decisive battle and clear measures of victory. This marks the beginning of accepting that the military may have to settle for less than total victory or decisive military action and may ultimately prove akin to opening Pandora's box. The

policy shift towards looser force application guidelines and more fluid ideas of victory was later affirmed when Powell's successor, General John Shalikashvili, rejected the notion that the Pentagon should "only do the big ones."¹⁵ By proving eager to be flexible and relevant, military leaders may be seen as loosening the restraints on when, where, and why U.S. forces are sent into harm's way.

Early Clinton Understanding

"When our vital interests are challenged, or the will and conscience of the international community is defied," President Clinton said at his Jan 93 inauguration, "we will act—with peaceful diplomacy whenever possible, with force when necessary."¹⁶ Beyond similar platitudes, literature surveys reveal many concepts labeled the "Clinton Doctrine," but no agreement exists on what it is. The consistent features are that it is "indecisive, contradictory, and confused. . . . It is difficult to discern a coherent, overlaying doctrine in the usually accepted sense; that is, a body of beliefs, principles, or guidelines which inform policy formulation and conduct."¹⁷ Between published doctrine in National Security Strategies and reaction to world events, certain repetitive elements can be derived, but actions have not been consistent. The trends favor the following description:

1. Frequent action abroad taken collectively with the United Nations or some other alliance.
2. Aversion to casualties. Ground forces are inserted only after assurances of no combat, and then with restrictive rules. Sometimes the forces are even forbidden from fully engaging in the humanitarian mission that brought them there.
3. When fighting must be done, employing high technology cruise missiles or air strikes.
4. Tangible, militarily significant damage is a low priority. This has invited reference to therapeutic or cathartic bombardment--full of appearance. Real damage to the adversary, and the harm to public opinion ratings it may bring are feared almost as much as loss of U.S. forces.

Domestically, the air of "doing something" and "making a difference" takes center stage. In short, the Clinton doctrine can be described as an octopus, with many arms, slippery, inky, and changing colors with the environment. It did not start out that way, but over time the Weinberger and Powell Doctrines, which had guiding influence initially, slipped quietly from the scene. The first movements in this direction occurred before President Clinton was elected.

In 1992 at West Point's graduation, after leading two of the more successful U.S. military operations

since 1945, President Bush argued against fixed rules or rigid criteria for using force. Instead of using it as a last resort, Bush viewed force as a temporary alternative to diplomacy when useful to important, but not quite vital, interests.¹⁸ With President Bush's indication that he too would drop standards restricting military deployment, perhaps U.S. adventures overseas would have occurred regardless of the election results.

The October 1993 deaths of American servicemen in Somalia had added another painful chapter in U.S. experiences overseas by the time the Clinton Administration enunciated its guidelines for use of force in 1994.

The Administration began life by affirming that, although it was aware of its post-Cold War responsibilities as the only remaining global superpower the United States would not act as the world's sole policeman-cum-social worker. This apparent commitment to multi-lateral diplomacy and a collectivist approach to conflict resolution was promptly contradicted by Presidential Decision Directive 25 of May 1994 which restricted U.S. participation in collective security and declared that 'the United States does not support a standing U.N. Army, nor will it earmark specific U.S. military units for participation in U.N. operations.'¹⁹

Although the exact text is still classified secret, the PDD-25 became an early centerpiece of the Clinton foreign policy by limiting how the U.S. would maintain control over its forces in its collective security engagements. In effect, it does little to limit U.S. incursions overseas other than express preference that they serve U.N. interests under U.S. command.²⁰ Significantly however, under the cloak of secrecy, lies evidence of draft proposals for "rapid expansion" of U.N. military capability and formally placing U.S. forces under U.N. command.²¹ It is not hard to see why the final version deleted these points after the public opinion backlash following the ambush in Mogadishu.

The Administration's February 1995 National Security Strategy Report borrowed heavily from Weinberger's and Powell's ideas. Some significant declarations included "It is unwise to specify in advance all the limitations we will place on our use of force. . . It then listed three categories of national interests--vital, important, and humanitarian--with differing guidelines for the possible use of force."²² The purpose of any use of force is "to support U.S. diplomacy in responding to key dangers" and only when

"there is reason to believe our action will bring lasting improvement."²³ Prior to committing military force, the administration promised to ask some hard questions:

Have we considered non-military means that offer a reasonable chance of success? Is there a clearly defined, achievable mission? What is the environment of risk we are entering? What is needed to achieve our goals? What are the potential costs—both human and financial—of the engagement? Do we have reasonable assurance of support from the American people and their elected representatives? Do we have time lines and milestones that will reveal the extent of success or failure, and in either case, do we have an exit strategy?²⁴

Obviously in mind were clear, achievable missions and time lines measuring progress to exit strategies. Goals, costs, and the support of the population and Congress were also there. Although now phrased in the form of questions, this passage clearly addresses most of the concerns of Weinberger. With sufficient answers, the administration promised to send troops abroad "with a clear mission and, for those operations that are likely to involve combat, the means to achieve their objectives decisively."²⁵ It also acknowledged the need for public support to sustain any military operation, but urged "unwavering commitment to our objective" once forces are deployed, and resistance to "reflexive calls for early withdrawal," because these would encourage adversaries to inflict U.S. casualties in order to drive U.S. forces home.²⁶ General Powell's Doctrine, although not specifically endorsed, was perhaps the major influence on force deployment considerations. This would slowly change.

Devolution into the Clinton-Albright "Doability" Doctrine

The essentially cautious and conservative ideas in the Powell Doctrine were opposed by many civilian policy makers, especially Madeleine Albright, then U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations and currently Secretary of State. Before the American deaths in Somalia in a Spring 1993 meeting, she exploded at Powell "What's the point of having this superb military you're always talking about if we cannot use it?"²⁷ Secretary Albright endorses using military power in "flexible ways to address practical if limited goals."²⁸ Rather than holding American military power in reserve against national security threats, it was to be used as an adjunct to diplomatic goals associated with "assertive multilateralism" and the new Engagement and Enlargement grand-strategic theme that had been chosen by the Clinton Administration as successor to

Containment.

The elements of "Doability" are indefinable, and this is probably by design. Depending on the specific example, it ignores many, if not all of the Weinberger and Powell principles, but inserts its own phobia against politically unpopular losses—even among the enemy. The Clinton national security team never publicly decided upon it as a sea change of policy direction, rather it drifted into it. The criteria for involvement is: if the capability exists to do something with military forces, then it fits the "doable" criteria. For example, "can the U.S. lead a U.N. force into Haiti, seize the major nodes, remove the current administration and install a replacement? Can it be done at costs we can accept?" If so, it fits the doability criteria, which focuses on capabilities almost exclusively. This concentration on if something *could* be done imperils potentially more important questions if it *should* be done. Force employment against superficial problems and reaction to events becomes the strategy. "Can we bomb Saddam Hussein because he does not allow our weapons inspectors access?" If the answer is "yes," then it is acted upon. Again, posturing by "doing something" is more important than an end-state conveniently left undefined. "Wanting to make a difference" is a cliché often attached to President Clinton's generation. Such ambiguity has become the hallmark of this administration's strategies under Secretary Albright.

Expressed in policy and bombs, the Administration views managing the "teacup wars" of the world as America's main strategic challenge.²⁹ The trend began with his successor, but by the end of the first Clinton Administration, with General Powell out of office, military force was increasingly used.

In September 1994, some 20,000 troops were sent into Haiti; two months later some forces were sent to Rwanda; in December 1995, 30,000 U.S. ground troops were sent into Bosnia as part of a NATO force; in late 1996 the President indicated we would join a Canada-led mission to Zaire. . . . General Dennis Reimer, the Army Chief of Staff, noted that Army troops had been deployed in significant operations 25 times since the fall of the Berlin Wall.³⁰

This compares with 17 military operations during the two Reagan terms and 14 under Bush.³¹ Of course, these figures were before DESERT FOX (Iraq) and ALLIED FORCE (Kosovo). Congressman Curt Weldon more recently placed the number at 32 military deployments costing \$19 billion.³² The numbers

alone would indicate the major tenets of the Powell Doctrine have been violated in letter and spirit. Force was not massive and our vital interests were not involved.³³ Some significant lessons have been learnt along the way.

Doability In Action

The Somalia experience of withdrawing after casualties prompted modifications in the Clinton White House's approach to using force. Because the public consensus seemed to be that if political objectives are limited, the willingness to endure costs will be also, it was decided casualties must be kept very low. Even if their support is not needed to initiate an operation, public or Congressional opposition can end an operation if the President is unwilling to take political "heat." If Somalia was a problem that caught the new Administration unprepared, Haiti was one of their own creation. After largely declaring victory and going home, the operation devolved into an open-ended commitment that in March 1999 prompted the U.S. Southern Commander, during a closed session before Congress, to recommend termination of U.S. presence because of continued instability.³⁴

In the Balkans, the 1995 Dayton Accords in effect endorsed the territorial realignment that this communal conflict had produced and did not restore the status quo ante--which was the original objective.³⁵ But that was doable and success was declared. By this time, criticism for lack of overall policy was mounting. In defense of criticism of using force without clear strategy, Secretary of Defense Perry argued that interventions "like Bosnia and Haiti followed the Powell Doctrine because the missions were clearly defined, the rules of engagement precise, and troop levels were sufficiently large."³⁶ This attempt to hide behind the cloaks of the strategically respected if not completely satisfactory Powell Doctrine is interesting--vital interests, commitment to victory, clear objectives are notably absent.

Rwanda was a foreign policy success only if one measures inaction as success. Perhaps Weinberger's principles deserve some of the blame. The loss of 18 servicemen³⁷ in Somalia seemingly deterred the Clinton Administration from taking any role in stopping the massacre of as many as 800,000 Rwandans in

90 days of violence. The Administration viewed the costs and risks of trying to feed people or stop the slaughter in ethnic conflict as too high. The Rwanda episode was significant in at least three ways. First, it demonstrated the U.S. ability to not be directly involved in a humanitarian disaster. Second, a new and distinct category for force deployment emerged—when only the military has the capabilities to jump-start a relief effort.³⁸ Third, the psychological and political burden of standing aside there fertilized the U.S. involvement in Kosovo. Somewhere between the two lessons of loss for limited interests in Somalia and standing aside genocidal horror in Rwanda lie the motives for the White House's policy toward Kosovo.

As the Doability Doctrine has developed to date, it is hard to estimate how the U.S. might react in any given situation. A commentator's 1997 remark remains startlingly accurate. "These seemingly disparate initiatives once again displayed an unresolved mix of 'idealpolitik' and 'realpolitik' where overall policy consistency and coherence appeared to be sacrificed on the altar of domestic considerations and ad-hocery."³⁹

On paper, this need not be the case. Doability cannot be found per se, but the elements that let it emerge can be. Over time the constraints against using American force overseas can be seen in the May 1997 and October 1998 National Security Strategies (NSS), where the Clinton Administration reiterated many of the same themes found in its 1995 document, added a few, and dropped some, too. The 1997 document saw the questions regarding military force commitment removed. It also put a premium on

intervening when the costs and risks are commensurate with the stakes involved and when there is reason to believe that our action can make a real difference. Such efforts by the United States and the international community will be limited in duration and designed to give the affected country the opportunity to put its house in order.⁴⁰

It also underscored the central role the American people play in how the U.S. wields power abroad. In his strategy, President Clinton said "the United States cannot long sustain a commitment without the support of the public, and close consultations with Congress are important to this effort. When it is judged in America's interest to intervene, we must remain clear in purpose and resolute in execution."⁴¹ Earlier references to costs, time lines, and exit strategies were conspicuously missing. The 1998 version also

retained the categorization of vital, important, and humanitarian/other national interests. It addresses the subject of military force under the category of diplomacy. "Credible military force and the demonstrated will to use it are essential to defend our vital interests. . . force, diplomacy, and our other policy tools must complement and reinforce each other."⁴² The mention of defined time limits, found only in the '97 doctrine in reference to humanitarian interests, was totally absent in '98. Details on vital or important interests or specifics when force should be used were also missing. If you do not have guidelines, you cannot be accused of violating them.

Recent Events, Analysis of Doability

On March 23, 1998, President Clinton summarized his "foreign policy" goals broadly. "I want us to live in a world where we get along with each other, with all of our differences, and where we do not have to worry about seeing scenes every night for the next 40 years of ethnic cleansing in some part of the world."⁴³ Opposing ethnic cleansing and the slaughter of innocents follows from this idea, but anytime the United States does not act, anywhere around the world, it violates the policy's principles. Because it is so impossibly moralistic and universal, it is equally impossible to carry through with complete consistency, even assuming sufficient public, Congressional, and budgetary support. In April 1999, President Clinton described his motives in Kosovo, summing up the Doability Doctrine. "We know that we cannot stop all such conflicts. But when the harm is great and when our values and interests are at stake and when we have the means to make a difference, we should try."⁴⁴

The utility of such vagueness is no accident. If you cannot define and measure something, it cannot be judged a success or a failure. The contemporary policy of the Clinton Administration lacks criteria for using military force. Considerations for clear missions, time lines, and exit strategies that had been phrased originally as questions under the 1995 National Security Strategies (NSS) were deleted in later versions. In his analysis of the Clinton 1995 NSS, Charles A. Stevenson asked the following questions: "What if the risks and military requirements are high? What if there is no reasonable assurance of

domestic support? What if murky and multiple objectives make it hard to specify milestones for success and a safe exit strategy?" Under Doability there are no answers.

Seneca said that if you do not know the port to which you are sailing, all winds are foul.⁴⁵ But in the case of the Clinton national security team, if no port has been declared, then all winds can be fair, progress can be swift, and credit can be claimed for the distance traveled. When show matters more than substance and posturing for domestic consumption is the major concern, any port will do. It seems that whenever the State Department is incapable of achieving a goal diplomatically and the rival is small and politically isolated enough, the U.S. quickly resorts to high profile, low impact use of military force. Perhaps it learned the wrong lesson from the Persian Gulf War, that combat can be purely technological, antiseptic, with little loss of life. If the military was made too timid because of the Vietnam War, some policy advisors were too emboldened by DESERT STORM.

Criteria For A Middle Way

It is easier to criticize the decisions of others than it is to take their place. Nonetheless, strategy should not be haphazard. Force employment from a consistent set of guidelines can create more predictability and contribute to world stability, while more wisely using finite U.S. resources. Current conditions are stacked against the military. A demographic trough undermining recruiting and major retention problems, combined with aging equipment and a forecast for eventually shrinking military budgets creates conditions where U.S. forces cannot be everywhere doing everything. Someone must choose. There are no easy answers. Simple realism represented by Weinberger and Powell's Doctrines is not realistic given America's heritage as world leader and its own self-image. The idealism of Doability, unchecked by consideration of long term consequences, will wear out and perhaps discredit what forces we have left.

Force without a plan is misused force. Guidelines for using military force should be found in the National Security Strategy and supported by the National Military Strategy and force structure. By having them published, friends and foes can take guidance accordingly and the world can stabilize. They are not a

panacea, but rather a tool to focus the decision maker so that they will hopefully come to wise policy decisions. The alternatives analyzed above all had strengths and weaknesses. Weinberger and Powell's Doctrines could not handle ambiguity or reconcile legitimate demands of idealism. Doability is full of directionless sympathy, but it does not recognize the rising dangers of military erosion and the harm its flighty attention span visits upon America's long term interests.

Potential =	(<i>Capability</i> to bring about an effect) X (<i>Intent</i> to use capability for an objective) X (<i>Will</i> to accept costs in achieving an objective.)
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Perhaps Sun Tzu was wisest. "If not in the interests of the state, do not act," he said. "If you cannot succeed, do not use troops. If you are not in danger, do not fight."⁴⁶ When force is to be used wisely, it must have an achievable objective. Regardless of the results on a battlefield or the negotiating table, victory means obtaining one's objectives at acceptable costs. To do this, one can attack the *capability*, *intent*, *will* of an adversary, or a combination thereof, through strategy focused on the adversary's center of gravity. Clausewitz taught that since war is not an act of senseless passion but is controlled by its political object, the value of this object must determine the sacrifices made for it in magnitude and also in duration. Once expenditure of effort exceeds the value of the political object, the object must be renounced and peace must follow.⁴⁷ Of course, the costs of renouncing objects demonstrate clearly what costs a nation is willing to bear and can leave the impression of hesitancy and weakness.

All the criteria in the world will not correct poorly conceived policy goals and mis-aimed strategy. To correctly aim policy, one must understand the nature of struggling potentials and victory. Struggle is a dynamic balancing between two side's potentials. One's product must diminish for either to "win." These terms can be tricky. *Intent* differs from *will* as desiring a goal differs from the willingness to sacrifice to obtain that goal. Many *intend* to be financially wealthy, but fewer have the *will* to work hard, save, and sacrifice immediate gratification to obtain the goal. *Capability* to wage war is no threat if the

enemy has no *intent* to focus that *capability* at a rival. The U.S. does not fear the United Kingdom's military *capability* because the U.K. intends the U.S. no harm even though it could inflict some. Similarly, *will* is crucial if war is to be waged after its costs become known. In Vietnam, the U.S. had more *capability*, and for a period, sufficient *intent* to fight the communist forces. Ultimately the U.S. lacked the *will* to endure the costs of lives and treasure the North Vietnamese were clearly able to demand before their own *will* would waiver. Thus, the world's militarily most *capable* nation bowed before one of its economically poorest. *Capability* can be attrited, but if *will* and *intent* still burn, whenever an enemy regains the *capability*, the war will continue. The loser alone decides when it will end.

Just War And Humanitarian Intervention Doctrine

For that reason and others, the theory of Just War has some utility. A doctrine developed over time, it traditionally includes the following elements.

1. Just cause—self-defense against an aggressor
2. Legitimate authority makes the decision to go to war
3. Proportionality between means and ends
4. Reasonable chance of attaining legitimate objectives through the use of force
5. All other means of achieving the nation's good have been exhausted
6. Participants use no immoral weapons
7. Decisions to go to and conduct war must be made for moral and legal purposes.⁴⁸

Although dismissed by some as naive, its intent has merit for present and future U.S. decision makers pondering war. The American self-image is one of world leadership for moral reasons as much as for military and economic capability. Because of its moralist leanings, the U.S. does not fight wars as much as it goes on crusades. Its will is weak when it does not perceive its cause as just. Its will to shed blood and have its own blood shed will falter without a belief in its cause. For these reasons, if real cost is to be endured or inflicted by American forces, these criteria should be met.

Another implication of the $P = c \cdot i \cdot w$ concept is the importance of focusing more effort providing development aid and establishing the groundwork for peace. Doing so may prevent unneeded investments in military systems to destroy rival capability—important in current and future environments of fiscal

austerity. Military and budgetary planning are based on capabilities of rivals, not intention. On the other hand, the strategic goal of employing military force, deterrence of a rival, is based on intention.⁴⁹ Will frequently is not accounted for, but it must be for any guidelines for the use of force, because upon it depends cost.

Little can threaten the United States true survival. Whenever the United States fights abroad without direct threat to its own survival or a truly vital interest, the people's willingness to accept cost will be finite. A clear accounting of the relative psychology, culture, and stakes for the adversary, from the perspective of the adversary, is needed. Unless they will renounce the object the U.S. forces want within a cost the U.S. will endure and exact, then a critical strategic error will likely result from the use of force. As said by a football coach, "whenever a forward pass is thrown, three things can happen, and two of them are bad."⁵⁰ Similarly, whenever military force is employed, stalemate and withdrawal, or open defeat can occur. Additionally, the objective may come at a cost too high to bear or too high to comfortably inflict. Considering the American penchant for couching war aims in idealistic terms, it may run unacceptably contrary to the U.S. self image to willingly destroy things when the crusade's mission is to "save" them.

Because truly vital interests of the United States are relatively secure, more frequent will be cases when lesser actions should be considered for other, perhaps moral reasons. Focusing exclusively on international legal norms like sovereignty at the expense of ideals such as justice encourages intolerable horrors and disorder. But not all crises are of equal importance and resources are limited. Questions to guide intervention for humanitarian reasons should include:

1. Is the crisis, the domestic conflict, or the policy pursued within the borders of the state, likely to threaten regional or international peace and security?
2. Are there massive violations of human rights, even in the absence of such a threat?⁵⁰

If this test is met, another set of considerations should be used to measure benefits and costs of potential humanitarian intervention:

⁵⁰ For the challenged, the ball can be either incomplete [neutral] or intercepted [bad].

1. Presumption in favor of nonintervention, that those who favor the action bear the burden of proving American interests are at stake.
2. Those stakes should be classified and acted upon accordingly. How much we should spend or risk should depend on what we have at stake. Are we, for example, meeting the pledges of allies, controlling the proliferations of weapons, promoting open markets, or responding to direct threats to our own security? Preventing genocide of thousands?
3. Clearly define objectives that can be understood by the public and that have a good, realistic chance of attainment.
4. Action taken and force employed should be in proportion to the importance of the aims.
5. Exercise restraint in the pain we inflict on others. If you do not want to spend American lives via military invasion, is it more moral to starve mothers and children via economic embargo? Do we want to create only wounded and bitter enemies?⁵¹

Whether they adapt the rigid go/no-go criteria of the Weinberger Doctrine or not, the political leaders considering force should obtain satisfactory answers to questions similar to those found in the early Clinton National Security Strategies. Sun Tzu said, "If instructions are not clear and commands not explicit, it is the commander's fault."⁵² As commander in chief, the President must be clear to his military. Without defining and articulating a new strategy to replace the void about what is worth fighting for, the wild destabilizing swings between indifference (Rwanda) and interventionism (Haiti, Somalia, Kosovo) will continue. Civilian leadership must provide a persuasive account of American purpose to muster public support. They also must provide clear objectives and criteria for success. As General George Joulwan, the former commander of the Rwanda relief operation said, "sometimes the State Department likes to have fuzziness in all this, but when you commit forces, you have to have objectives."⁵³

A Modest Proposal

If the Administration wants to continue to conduct humanitarian actions under the Clinton-Albright Doability Doctrine, it must structure its forces appropriately. Perhaps review of the National Security Act of 1947 and a separate service whose mission is peacekeeping should be considered. Doing more with less and the frenetic, apparently directionless policies the armed services are often ordered to implement are a far cry from the mission of defending America many "signed up for." Such a mis-match between mission and force structure contributes to personnel problems that, if not curtailed, will make any military intervention hazardous.

If the U.S. can maintain its capability, the wisdom of its action deserves review. Once the criteria of Just War or Humanitarian Intervention are satisfied, then the sum wisdom of Weinberger, Powell, Sun Tzu and Clausewitz should be drawn upon. Phrased in questions like those found in the 1995 NSS and focused on the concepts found in $P = c \cdot i \cdot w$, the following are a series of questions that the civilian leadership must honestly answer. Questions appropriate for the operational level will follow for the military commander. If most are not satisfied, military intervention should be reconsidered.:

1. What is the objective of using force? It may be idealistic—but the means used should not be. If the objective cannot be simply stated, it may be too nebulous for military force.
2. Can it “least expensively” be achieved by force? Is it *likely* to be achieved by force, given what is known about $P = c \cdot i \cdot w$ balance analyzed from the adversary’s perspective of culture, psychology, and stake? How hard will they fight? Can weaponry overcome this?
3. Does the military mission support the political objective? Is the mission clear?
4. Are the quality of the U.S. interests at stake worth the potential costs? At what point will the costs exceed the value of the objective? Credibility, body bags, treasure all have value.
5. Are the forces robust enough and well suited to achieve decisive victory within cost?
6. Is there clear consent (at a minimum, support preferred) by Congress and the American people? Will the campaign be short enough to maintain this?
7. Are foreseeable, unintended consequences of this mission execution acceptable?
8. What will achieving the objective and mission success look like? If one cannot clearly determine when they’re done, is the mission statement clear enough?
9. After the mission is achieved, then what? Is the end-state viable under the criteria above? Are we getting ourselves into a quagmire? Exit is an insufficient strategy.
10. Can the innate deterrence capacity of the military be maintained throughout? Are the costs of not doing this operation greater than the dangers inherent with potentially discrediting a military able to deter potential aggressors?

If the decision to intervene militarily is made, the military commander must ask:

1. What is the mission assigned to the military?
2. What is the course of action to accomplish the mission?
3. What forces are necessary to carry out the course of action and accomplish the mission?⁵⁴ Are tactics at conflict with goals?
4. What is the desired end-state from which the military can determine milestones and measure progress to achieving the objective?

Regardless of whatever policy is chosen, some assumptions about these criteria are implicit. First, discretion of the President remains. Any doctrine would be a guideline, not an absolute mechanism to dictate interests involved and actions required. Second, rapid success is seen by many as imperative. A face saving exit strategy may be necessary, but it is best if such contingencies are well considered before

forces are sent abroad. No singular doctrine sufficiently addresses all factors vital for good policy, but elements from them and others can contribute to wise policy when military intervention is contemplated.

The current criteria for American military intervention can be improved to better achieve our policy goals. Military strategy must be tailored to the enemy targeted, not exclusively formed around one's own military strengths. We should have learned that lesson in Vietnam. Weinberger, Powell, Doability and other alternatives are worthy of consideration, but they need not be considered singularly. Important considerations such as the Just War and Humanitarian Intervention recommendations help too. Yet unless the fundamentals of $P = c \cdot i \cdot w$ are observed, then the potential of any policy goal will be limited. If American forces continue to service a piecemeal foreign policy with no greater considerations than the latest public opinion polls or whether something is "doable," the United States will continue contributing to a world less stable than it needs to be.

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